MachiniManiac User Manual

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Version 1.0

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Getting Started

You have acquired the *MachiniManiac HUD* presumably because you have an interest in creating machinima in Second Life. I hope that this tool will make it easier for you to reach your goals in machinima production. It will allow you to set up various camera setups and record a sequence of these cameras so that some of your tasks can be automated. Before you begin exploring the interface of the *MachiniManiac HUD*, you should make sure that the HUD is attached to either the top right or top left attachment points or manually adjust it so that the HUD appears on the left or right side of the screen. If you are not familiar with HUDs (Heads-Up Displays) there is a wonderful video tutorial on the Second Life wiki at http://wiki.secondlife.com/wiki/HUD

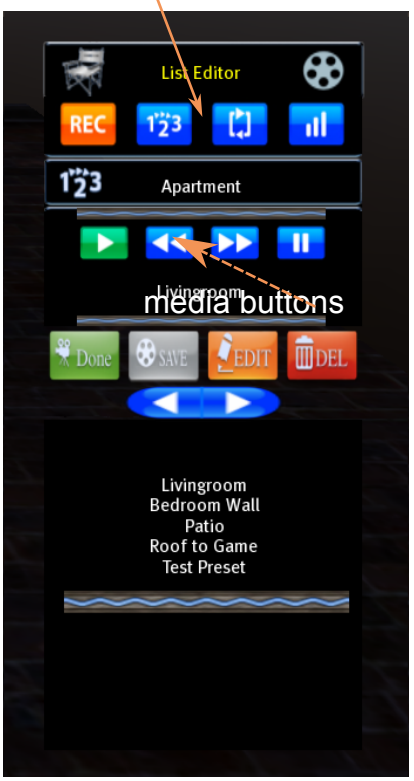
Now that your *MachiniManiac HUD* is attached adjust your UI size so that the text that appears is large enough to be easily readable. In the Phoenix Viewer this is accomplished via the General tab of the preferences window. In Viewer 2 adjust the UI size via the Advanced tab of the preferences window. Although it may seem that the *MachiniManiac HUD* is taking up much valuable screen real estate, note that when you actually film your movie, the HUD will be hidden so that you will be able to film the entire screen. Next, we will explore the various parts of the interface.

The Interface

The *MachiniManiac* interface consists of several screens each of which performs a specific task. On the right is a screenshot of the opening screen, the first screen that will appear after the splash/loading screen. At the top is the title bar. It contains an icon that looks like a movie reel. Clicking this icon will bring up the **Help Menu**. Next is the status bar. The icon on the left of the status bar is the type indicator. The selection panel will indicate which item from a list is the currently selected item. Clicking on one of the action buttons will apply that action to the selected item.

The opening screen shows the camera lists that you have created. Click the **New Button** to create and name a new list. Once a list has been created, it cannot be renamed. Editing the list will allow you to add and delete cameras to and from the list. Create a new list then click edit to go to the ***List Editor*** screen.

List Editor



The ***List Editor*** screen is where you will manage the cameras in your camera lists. Here you will record cameras and edit certain properties.

Click the orange **Record Button** to enter recording mode. Once in recording mode, select a camera type using the type selector, then click the recording media button to capture the current camera's position and rotation. There are three types of cameras that you can capture - Fixed, Path, and Preset. Fixed cameras are just that; they represent a single position and rotation of the camera in region coordinates. Paths are a series of positions and rotations that we will transition between. Path cameras must contain at least 2 points. Presets are not fixed and are used to determine how the camera should follow your avatar. However, as the director of your machinima film you may not be participating as an actor, so the usefulness of presets could be limited if not for the *MachiniManiac Actor HUD* which allows another avatar to act as an actor in regards to a particular preset. Instead of looking at your own avatar when playing a preset camera, you will actually be looking through the viewpoint of the assigned actor.

The type indicator is the icon on the left side of the status bar. In the image above and to the right, the currently selected camera is called Livingroom, and its type is fixed as indicated by the type indicator icon. You can capture several fixed cameras in a row. As you capture each camera it will be saved with an auto-generated name which you can modify after you are done recording.

Try capturing some cameras of each type before you go on to read about the ***Preset Editor*** and the ***Path Editor***. Hit the **Play Button** and experiment with the effect of clicking on the rewind and fast forward buttons in the media button panel, as well as the effect of navigation using the navigate buttons. If you find that the camera does not switch, hitting the escape key on your keyboard should fix that.

Notice that the icon on the left of the title bar looks like a director's chair. Clicking this icon will bring you to the ***Director*** screen. It is only from the ***List Editor*** that you can enter the ***Director*** screen and vice versa. Don't click it yet; we will get to the ***Director*** screen shortly, but first let us look at the two editor screens, the ***Path Editor*** and the ***Preset Editor***.

Select a camera of the path type in the ***List Editor*** and click the **Edit Button**. The ***Path Editor*** screen appears.

The different camera types are symbolized by these icons.

Fixed:

Path:

Preset:

Path Editor

Paths are multiple camera positions and rotations which, when played are played in sequence and the positions/rotations between them are played as well using intepolation between the points. The number of steps between one camera and the next can be edited from this screen. If you click the **Edit Button** while not in play mode, you will be able to edit the name of the path. Enter play mode by clicking the play button in the media panel. You should now be seeing through the first camera in the path list. For each camera point in the path, you can now edit the number of steps between these points by clicking the **Edit Button**. As you modify this property, you will immediately see the effect of the change. Choose the smallest number of steps that will give you the effect you want.

While still in play mode, use the fast forward button on the media button panel to view the transitions between each camera and the next one in the path. To switch directly to the next camera without seeing the transition, use the navigation buttons. The selected path point will appear in the selection panel. When playing a transition the status panel will display both the start point and the end point of the sub-path you are playing, otherwise it will display the name of the path.

In this screen you can also add and delete path points. Select a point in the path then hit the **Record Button** to bring you into recording mode. Click the record button of the media panel once you have set up the camera postion and rotation to capture that point and add it into the path after the previously selected point. Play with adding, deleting and editing path points. Make sure you save your changes before returning to the ***List Editor***. Click the **Done Button** to return to the ***List Editor*** and click play. Notice that the path does not automatically play. This is because sometimes you have to hit the escape key to get the camera to "take". Make sure that the first path point is playing, then click play again to view the path. Voila! You are ready to edit a preset.

You can always tell which screen you are in by looking at the title bar.

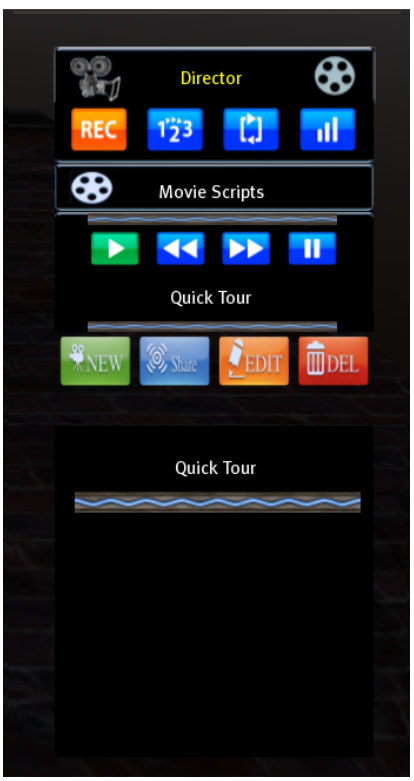
Preset Editor

The list you will see in this screen is a list of all the editable camera parameters for the preset. The status bar will show the name of the preset you are editing. The selected parameter name will appear in the selection panel along with its current value. Navigate through the list to view the values for each parameter. When you "capture" a preset it actually just creates a preset with the default camera parameters. You must edit these parameters if you wish to change any of the values.

If you click the Edit Button while in this screen you will be able to change the name of the preset. Clicking the Play action button applies the current preset and allows you to edit the individual parameters, immediately seeing the effect of the change. Once you make any changes to this peset, the Save Button will become enabled. Click this button to save your changes or click the Done Button to return to the List Editor. You will be asked to confirm that you wish to abandon your changes if you have not saved the preset.

Play around with the parameters and when you are ready, return to the List Editor then click the Director icon to create your first movie script.

Director



You have finally arrived at the meat of the MachiniManiac HUD. The Director screen will allow you to define a timed sequence of cameras to be used while filming your movie. This sequence is referred to as a Movie Script and is based off of the camera list you had selected in the List Editor.

If there are no movie scripts defined for the current list you will be immediately placed into recording mode. You may have up to 30 cameras in your camera list to use as the raw material for your movie script. A grid of numbers will appear that will allow quick switching between cameras. A list of the camera names and their associated numbers will appear to the side of the HUD as a reminder of the camera list order. As soon as you click one of the numbered buttons, a timer begins timing the delay between this camera and the next. The current time in seconds will be displayed in the status bar. Click the next camera in the sequence, and the timer is reset.

If you click a button in error, just hit delete and the last recorded camera will be deleted from the sequence. Press the stop recording button to exit recording mode. If this is a new movie script you will be prompted for a name. If it is an existing movie that you are recording, the current recording will overwrite the previous one.

Now it is time to play your movie script. When you hit the Play button, if there is a preset in your movie script a message will be sent out to any avatars wearing a MachiniManiac Actor HUD. If no actor accepts the role the peset will play through the eyes of your avatar.

The HUD will now be moved off screen and control turned over to the keyboard. You can decide which keys will control the movie playback before entering play mode by opening up the Help Menu (click the reel icon in the top right of the title bar). Select the Controls option to be prompted for the appropriate control choices. These preferences will be automatically saved.

You can share a movie script you have created with an avatar who is also wearing a MachiniManiac HUD. The avatar wishing to receive the script should be in the opening screen. The recipient should click the reel icon at the top right of the title bar to bring up the Help Menu. There should be an option named Get Movie. Click this button. The avatar who wishes to share their script should now click the Share Button while in the Director screen. The receiver should now get a dialog asking them if they wish to accept the movie script. Click the Yes option to accept. The movie script, the camera list and all associated cameras will then be copied over to the recipient. The messages sent between HUDS are done using whisper, so the two avatars must be within whisper range (10 meters) in order for the transfer to succeed.

Have fun playing with the MachiniManiac HUD! To provide feedback or report a bug bring up the help menu and select the Feedback option. To check for responses or important update notices choose the Mail option.

Spare Time Games

Spare Time Games is a one person (Zarin's first life persona) indie game development company focusing on web based and iPhone/iPad games.

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